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## BOOK REVIEWS

*An Ethnologic Dictionary of the Navaho Language.* THE FRANCISCAN FATHERS. St. Michaels, Arizona, 1910.  $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{4}$ , 536 pp., ills.

There is something new in the world, not in an absolute sense, not actually new material, but a new combination. This sometimes happens when a strange name appears on the menu and a piqued curiosity is satisfied by ordering it. One concludes at the first glance in this case that something has gone wrong in the kitchen and that two separate courses have become mixed. What we have here seems to be an ethnological treatment of the Navaho intermingled with copious linguistic material. Both are good and desirable but perhaps not in combination for all interested. Many are interested in ethnology but too little interested in linguistics to care for the many native terms and phrases which occur in the body of the paragraphs as well as follow them. Such persons should read the introduction and then turn to the subject of "food" on page 204. When the end of the book is reached, the appetite will still be unsatisfied, and the preceding pages may be gleaned for crumbs.

An ethnological work should first of all contain facts, new and certain; there should be some logical grouping of the facts, not only for ease in finding them but also to produce a harmonious picture in the reader's mind; and lastly some comments are usually expected dealing with the evolution of the matters treated and the occurrence of similar facts among neighboring peoples. For the present, the gathering and presentation of facts is of prime importance. The new critical attitude in anthropology requires that we know whether facts are directly observed, given on the word of a native, or are the oral or written report of another observer.

It is to be assumed that the larger portion of the material here presented is the result of direct observation for which the Franciscan Fathers have had exceptional opportunity. The Franciscan Fathers have an advantage in numbers and the opportunity of being continuously with the Navaho for many years, while the professional ethnologist works alone and can usually devote but a few months in the aggregate to work among a people. It is often a matter of chance as to which phase and how much of primitive activity he shall witness. Observed facts are most valuable and need to be scrutinized only to know if the activity witnessed be normal and representative. Matters reported by natives need critical care, and the

independent statements of several individuals should be compared. The ideal method seems to be the reporting of these differing and often conflicting statements, and the adding of the author's own opinion as to which is the most probable. Some informants name and describe mythical animals as if they were real. Former conditions of life are sometimes described by Indians where the statements are prompted by a desire to explain the origin of present conditions or to fill up the void of the great unknown past. Unless an Indian has himself seen these things or has been told by others who have seen them, little dependence can be placed on the statements. A sentence in the preface indicates that considerable care has been taken in this important matter. Several felines are distinguished as probably mythical on page 140. However, the primitive type of house (p. 327) and the early costume (p. 457) described may be mental reconstructions of a mythical era. The neighboring and related Apache tell in considerable detail of a culture which existed before they were possessed of bows and arrows, when food and wearing apparel derived from the larger animals were entirely lacking. It is needless to say that the bowless period was well before the date of trustworthy tradition. There may still be Navaho who wear clothing of yucca fiber, but it seems hardly necessary to suppose that there was ever a time when the Navaho as distinguished from other primitive men were restricted to such clothing.

Of the facts reported from others, the greater number are taken from the works of Dr Washington Matthews. While due credit is given in all cases, one would have been thankful for footnotes giving exact references to publication and page. In the case of another authority, unnecessary consideration has been shown in applying academic honors where such are possessed only by courtesy.

The arrangement of the ethnological material is such as to be fairly accessible. From the title of the work one might have expected the matter to have been presented according to the alphabetical or dictionary-encyclopedia method. One is rather agreeably surprised to find in the latter portion of the book such grouping as is customary in ethnological monographs. The material here presented is exceedingly welcome, first because of the great importance of the people treated and second because, although much has been written of the Navaho, anything like a complete and consistent statement of their material culture has not previously been made. For a general treatise, the ground seems to have been carefully and adequately covered. To be sure a volume or two sometimes need to be written upon such special topics as blanket making. There might be no limit to the number of volumes dealing with the ceremonial life of the Navaho.

The authors have made little attempt at an explanation of the origin of the present culture of the Navaho, and these few comments are usually stated as personal opinions, not as settled conclusions. Such suggestions are valuable since they furnish stimulation for further inquiry and thought upon these interesting problems. The whence and when of the Athapascan migration is a difficult problem that needs for its consideration light from a large number of sources. All the other Athapascan peoples, north and south, and also their non-Athapascan neighbors, need to be carefully studied. The sources and evolution of the present Navaho culture can hardly be determined from a study, however prolonged and intensive, of the Navaho alone. The beliefs which the Indians themselves may have concerning the subject, valuable for the student of psychology and folklore, can throw but little light upon the problem. We need to know in detail the cultures of the surrounding and preceding peoples. We need to understand that the culture of a people is not an unchanging thing taken over as a whole from ancestors and neighbors, but is a growing, developing social product depending upon physical environment and social contact, the chief controlling factors. For example, it is not likely that the Navaho obtained their present art of blanket making from one definite people or that all designs upon them are borrowed. Blanket making more probably was slowly evolved under the influence of Spanish and Pueblo neighbors, and the art forms exhibited in them may have been already long imbedded in Navaho life before blankets were ever woven. This much is said, not in criticism of things contained or omitted in the volume here reviewed, but as an indication of other problems to be undertaken.

It seems certain from the words of the title and the preface that the portion of the work which non-linguistic readers have been advised to omit is the part nearer the hearts of the authors and that upon which a judgment of the work should be made. Again, it may be said that the volume is welcome because of the importance of the language treated and because a satisfactory linguistic work on the Navaho has never previously appeared. Dr Matthews has published a few texts in the "Navaho Legends" and a considerable number of ceremonial ones in the "Night Chant." He included in these and his other works many Navaho words and phrases, but it must be conceded, even by an ardent admirer of Dr Matthews' work, that he never quite conquered the phonetics of the Athapascan. This may have been due in part to a difficulty in hearing, noticeable in the later years of his life. It must be acknowledged that he used the same symbols in some cases for quite distinct sounds and that he overlooked

the glottal stops which are of vital importance in the treatment of the language.

Our authors have been more fortunate. Here again their numbers and long, continuous contact with the Navaho have aided them. Their representation of the language has been thorough and consistent, and these are the two essentials. But the descriptions given of the sounds represented do not quite convince one that they fully understand the processes involved in the sounds, which one cannot doubt they are able to speak with a high degree of accuracy. The "abrupt close of the vowel" represented by ' is followed in emphatic speech by a distinct sound marking the release of the glottis, the closure of which produces this abruptness. The hiatus between vowels (a'a) is of the same sort but of less duration and completeness. The "hiatus proper" is an aspiration, a forcing of surd breath through the releasing glottis forming the off-glide of the vowel. Now, when the glottal action is synchronous with or closely following a surd consonant, the "clicking" is produced, although it does not seem that the Navaho sounds are inspired as is said to be the case with clicks in Africa. The authors have quite consistently written, ch', ts', tl', t', and k'. One wishes equal consistency had been employed with the aspirated consonants and that the mark ' used to show aspiration after the vowel had been placed after them, ch', ts', t', k'. The letter q when standing alone has been used for a distinct continuant consonant requiring an approximation of the back of the tongue to the palate at one or more definite points. This sound is with minor exceptions quite different from the surd glide following the consonants, ch, ts, and t, written by our authors chq, tsq, and tq. It is only accidental that the tongue in passing from the position of t to a following vowel occupies for an instant the position which in the continuant consonant, represented when initial by q, is taken and held for a definite time.

The treatment of nasalized vowels seems happy and much to be preferred to the use of an exponent n. The sound *ń* might with better reason have been called syllabic "n" since it, unsupported by a vowel, forms a syllable regardless of whether the stress rests upon that syllable. There is a good old adage about "glass houses, etc.," that one had better recall before saying too much in criticism of a surprisingly adequate treatment of an exceedingly difficult subject.

When one perceives that the emphasis in this book is upon the linguistics and not the ethnology, the unusual combination explains itself. It is open to doubt whether the ethnology contained is sufficiently improved by the addition of so much linguistic material to warrant its inclusion. But, if the chief desire has been to present linguistic material, the presentation of the

ethnological material becomes a secondary matter. Linguistic material connected and interwoven with the objects and activities to which it is related becomes doubly valuable.

Linguistic material has generally been presented in one of two forms. Texts with translations presenting the words and phrases in a context reveal shades of meaning very difficult to convey by any number of near-equivalent words in another language. The text method is expensive in both time and money. The more common words and phrases must be repeated many times. Furthermore, these texts often do not present the more general aspect of a language. The style, if not the words themselves, belong to a "literary" dialect. The common dictionary-grammar method presents the language dead and dissected. In a dictionary the delicate shades of meaning can hardly be given. In a grammar the real truth, the actual structure, suffers violence because of the constraint of categories and paradigms to which the language is reduced.

The authors seem to have attempted, and to a considerable degree succeeded, in a presentation of the language in its living form as they have met it in their daily life among the Navaho. Persons interested in American languages from the scientific standpoint alone, usually study them with a view of translating and interpreting them into English. Our authors are engaged in learning to express themselves in Navaho. When a subject is to be considered they wish to be able to recall the words and phrases connected therewith.

One hesitates to say that either the method followed in this work or that of texts is the better to the exclusion of the other. Both have their advantages and perhaps ought both to be employed whenever practicable. The text method seems better adapted to an inductive study and presentation of the material. The question arises whether the order and method of presentation here employed will be convenient when one wishes to use the material for comparative study. Probably a strict alphabetical arrangement would have been more available.

To one who is acquainted with the hospitality of the Franciscan Fathers it occurs that perhaps this is not after all a one-course meal and that the dessert will be forthcoming. With keen appreciation of what has already been received one may safely anticipate a more complete presentation of the Navaho language in the future.

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